

2013 FEDERAL EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNER

Category 9 for Outstanding Public Contact Employee

CaRita A. Timms

Social Security Administration

FACTOR I - JOB COMPETENCE

CaRita A. Timms deserves recognition as a Federal Employee of the Year.

She is almost a Renaissance woman for the Social Security Administration – i.e., a lady of wide interests, expert in several areas spanning a significant number of pursuits and contributions.

Still young in age and experience, Ms. Timms has none-the-less stepped up to master multiple job aspects, demonstrating her ability to complete diverse tasks efficiently, and timely.

Initially hired to handle our Medicare' extra help' cases, Ms. Timms quickly expanded to take on additional claims representative responsibilities with such case workloads as retirement benefits and disability claims.

While doing so, CaRita revealed herself to be an excellent interviewer. CaRita helps us handle our hundreds of visitors each week. As a front-line representative, she represents the Social Security Administration (and the caring face of the federal government) to the public very well.

Ms. Timms' contacts with them are often difficult. She must cope with individuals of different educational, cultural and social/economic levels and backgrounds. Many speak broken English. Many are confrontational and demanding, especially in the area of disability.

CaRita sees through every interview efficiently and skillfully. Her knowledge and ability to serve our clientele, including those with the greatest health concerns, make an important contribution to SSA's success with our mission in serving our public. She has received several complimentary letters acknowledging her outstanding level of caring customer service.

FACTOR II - IMPACT

Most employees in our office have multiple job duties. CaRita is no different -- she balances her large claims taking and interviewing responsibilities, by processing such concerns as: continuing disability reviews, appeals, Medicare, and debt management cases. CaRita's stewardship ensures her additional workloads are controlled and managed efficiently.

Of additional note, CaRita has often stepped above beyond her assigned job duties. CaRita volunteered for our Speaker's Bureau. She has proven to be a masterful presenter and effective spokesperson for SSA. Through the years, CaRita has spoken to many groups, large and small, old and young, to explain our programs and our benefits.

In addition, she has attending many outreach events, health fairs, street festivals, seminars, and other opportunities to represent SSA away from our office and promote the important services we can offer.

Additionally, CaRita became a member of our office's training committee. She offered many ideas and insights on where training was needed. She skillfully led many training sessions herself.

Also, CaRita has stepped up to be a project leader. Most recently she volunteered to lead a work group challenged to rethink, innovate and realign how should handle the increasing hundreds of phone calls we receive daily. The committee, its project leader, and their recommendations were very successful.

And even more -- in addition, Ms. Timms volunteered to assist with out-of-office facility visits. These involve Congressionally-mandated site reviews for large institutions, agencies, and nursing homes –

these facilities often assume responsibility for receiving the Social Security checks on behalf of those in their care that are incapable of handling their own financial affairs. SSA's reviews assure that these vulnerable individuals' monies are appropriately spent or saved by the facility. Ms. Timms has been professional and effective with her assistance during these potentially sensitive on-site reviews, involving a facility's finances and accounting records.

Even more above and beyond -- CaRita has offered her skills as a Spanish-speaker. She effectively handles Spanish-speaking interviews for us, and will often volunteer to take on such interviews. She has accepted the additional responsibility of becoming a certified translator, officially translating many many documents for us.

Plus, plus -- Ms. Timms was recently accepted to serve on a detail (and a temporary promotion) as a Policy Specialist in our Chicago Regional Office. CaRita sought out this opportunity to develop her skills and expertise in tackling policy and complex procedure issues. Her performance while on the detail was outstanding.

In addition to all these plusses, CaRita has expanded into administrative responsibilities -- she has been willing to serve as a back-up timekeeper for our office, assisting us in assuring staff hours worked and leave taken are recorded correctly.

Plus, plus, plus -- CaRita became an active member of our office's Special Emphasis Committee. She oversaw many special recognition celebrations in our office, such as Hispanic Heritage Month (with a Family Feud trivia game for the staff), a celebration of women's equality, a Soul Food luncheon for Black History Month and a speaker for American Indian Heritage Month.

FACTOR III - SPECIAL EFFORTS

Ms. Timms has demonstrated special abilities and laudable flexibility with her willingness to take on different aspects of the complex SSA programs, tackling new and specialized workloads to help our office better oversee its recipients' needs.

Ms. Timms is a phenomenally versatile public service employee, skilled, useful, vital, and seeking to develop herself even further in an amazing number of ways-- all to help her and the Social Security Administration achieve its mission of serving the public.

Overall, Ms. Timms is an outstanding federal employee. Perhaps that can best be demonstrated by drilling down past her many Renaissance woman abilities, to one small example of what outstanding public service really can mean.

Our office received a letter which saying:

"This morning we met with Mrs. Timms. It was a remarkable experience.

We had driven to your Waukegan office to process a name change after the adoption of our eleven-year-old grandson, Dylan. Afterwards, we were referred to Mrs. Timms to discuss Social Security benefits on Dylan's behalf.

What a surprise! No one from the Arizona and Illinois governments in the many long months leading to our grandson's adoption had mentioned the possibility of benefits for Dylan. Mrs. Timms clearly explained the benefit and efficiently processed the paperwork.

This monthly benefit will help our retirement budget enormously and enrich Dylan's life. We are grateful. The purpose of this letter, however, is not to convey thanks but to compliment you on your employment of Mrs. Timms. She is entirely patient and gracious with a smile that immediately put us at ease. Her empathy was extraordinary as she explained the Auxiliary Children's Benefit and enjoyed our good fortune with us.

At the conclusion of our meeting, we told her we were going out for breakfast to celebrate, that we should bring her back a dozen donuts. Instead, we wrote this letter."